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Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

UNESCO Bangkok
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific
Regional Adviser for Culture in Asia and the Pacific

MEDIA RELEASE

Shigar Fort Palace in Pakistan wins top prize in the 2006 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards

BANGKOK, 1 September, 2006 - The UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific announced today that Shigar Fort Palace (in Skardu in the Northern region of Pakistan) has been honoured with the Award of Excellence in the 2006 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

The two Awards of Distinction went to Bund 18 (Shanghai, China) and the Uch Monument Complex (Punjab, Pakistan). Three Awards of Merit were given to St. Andrew's Church (Hong Kong SAR, China), Sir JJ School of Art (Mumbai, India), and Han Jiang Ancestral Temple (Penang, Malaysia).

Three Honourable Mention awards were conferred to Liu Ying Lung Study Hall (Hong Kong SAR, China); and Arakkal Kettu (Kerala, India); and Leh Old Town (Ladakh, India).

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards recognize the efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.

Eligible projects must be more than 50 years old and the restoration must have been completed within the past 10 years. Buildings must also have been in viable use for at least one year from the date of the Awards announcement.

UNESCO believes that recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic structures will encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within the community, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.

A total of 36 entries were received this year for the Heritage Awards from 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. A variety of types of projects were submitted for the Awards, including: five religious buildings, four institutions, five residential buildings, eleven commercial projects, three urban districts, four archaeological in-situ sites, one memorial and three mixed-use commercial buildings.

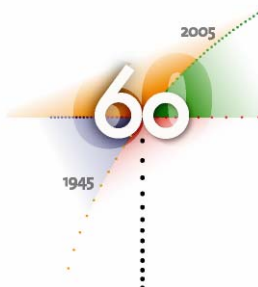
A total of six entries were received this year for the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation from four countries. No Commendations were awarded.

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Further information about the Heritage Awards and this year's winning entries can be found on the following website: <http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritageawards>.

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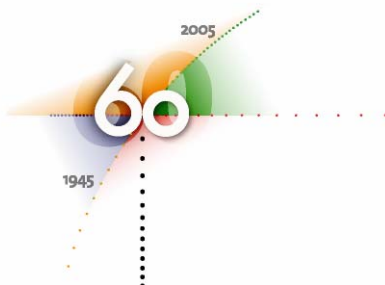
2006 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards

A panel of international conservation experts in architecture, urban planning, heritage conservation and landscape design conducted the selection process. The jury panel noted that the range of proposals received this year point to the increasing momentum and level of conservation in the Asia-Pacific region. All winning entries demonstrated sound understanding of the issues of conservation in relation to the cultural, social, historical, and architectural significance of the building or complex. In addition, all award-winning entries had an important impact in terms of stimulating further conservation works and all made a contribution to cultural continuity in their respective communities.

The Award of Excellence winner, Shigar Fort Palace (Skardu, Northern Areas, Pakistan) was commended for setting a high-profile precedent for a sustainable modern reuse of heritage structures in Pakistan. The adaptation into a boutique hotel has strategically capitalized on the complex's authentic local architecture and dramatic setting in the Karakoram mountains to create a unique destination for visitors. Through a holistic community development approach, multiplier effects from the project have benefited the local villagers in form of job creation, upgrade of shared infrastructure and water supply, and renewed pride in the area's rich crafts and intangible heritage traditions.

The **Award of Distinction winner, Bund 18** (Shanghai, China), was commended for demonstrating the highest level of technical standards in converting China's first foreign-capital bank into a high-end commercial building. The project has been accomplished through a successful partnership between international technical experts and local Chinese specialists and craftsmen, using a marriage of modern conservation techniques and local building traditions. The project's prominent location and subsequent popularity promise not only to redefine the modern face of Shanghai, but also to establish a new benchmark for technical sophistication, conservation rigor as well as commercial success.

The other **Award of Distinction winner, the Uch Monument Complex** (Punjab, Pakistan), was commended for safeguarding what was once one of the world's most endangered monuments by stabilizing the monumental ruins of three tombs dating back to the fifteenth century within the modern context of a living cultural landscape. The sensitive conservation approach will ensure that the patina of age is preserved. The deployment of innovative materials and techniques marks a welcome development for the field of conservation science in the sub-region. The project was undertaken through a productive collaboration with the government, international technical experts and local residents trained as para-professionals, with generous funding from the international community.



The three **Awards of Merit** went to:

St. Andrew's Church, Hong Kong SAR, China

The thoughtful restoration of St. Andrew's Church demonstrates the success of a thorough conservation approach which sought to fully understand the building's significance and deterioration process before proposing solutions. The meticulous research into the historic building techniques and materials has paid off handsomely, and is reflected in the project's respectful attitude to the original building components. The repair of the bell tower and long-silent bells, which now ring every Sunday morning, symbolizes the renewal of the church and its growing congregation.

Sir JJ School of Art Building, Mumbai, India

The restoration of the Sir JJ School of Art Building has reinvigorated India's premier art educational institution. Thorough restoration of the building envelope has consolidated the Neo-Gothic façade, while an ambitious programme to revive the school's academic calibre has succeeded in re-animating the institution's historic educational mission. The careful transfer of this conservation know-how to the local public works department will ensure that the impact of this project will be keenly felt in the future restoration of Mumbai's rich Victorian heritage.

Han Jiang Ancestral Temple, Penang, Malaysia

The Han Jiang Ancestral Hall has been restored to its former glory through a commendable effort by the Teochew community of Penang. Meticulous research was carried out to uncover the building's history and architecture and the involvement of master craftsmen from China has ensured that the level of workmanship matched the original standards. By revitalizing cultural and educational programmes, the project has succeeded in reviving the temple's religious and social functions, allowing it to serve once again as the heart of the community.

Three projects were given **Honourable Mentions**:

Liu Ying Lung Study Hall, Hong Kong SAR, China

In preparation for the Dajiao Festival, the Liu clan study hall in Hong Kong has been dramatically restored to its original Qing Dynasty condition. The removal of intrusive modern alterations added in the past century to accommodate a kindergarten has revealed the building's historic layout and structure. The study hall, complete with conserved murals and vernacular architectural details, now serves as a fitting backdrop for reviving communal social functions and rituals.

Arakkal Kettu, Kerala, India

The restoration of Arakkal Kettu has rescued a distinctive example of Kerala's architecture typology from a state of serious dilapidation, turning the 400-year old palace structure into a self-sustaining heritage museum about the state's Muslim royal traditions. A sensitive approach has been taken to retain the authenticity of the historic building through the use of local crafts and materials such as traditional lime. Through an innovative partnership between the Department of Archaeology, the Department of Tourism, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), and a privately-funded palace trust, this pilot project paves the way for future adaptations of heritage buildings in Kerala for cultural tourism purposes.

Leh Old Town, Ladakh, India

This small-scale project has catalyzed a conservation and urban rehabilitation movement in the ancient capital of Ladakh by successfully undertaking the pilot restoration of a residential neighborhood which includes a range of building typologies. By conducting a detailed social survey alongside a conservation inventory, the needs of the population were addressed in an integrated way. Through low-cost restoration using indigenous knowledge, skills and materials, it has demonstrated the feasibility for residents and authorities to upgrade historic quarters for modern living.